

Council on Postsecondary Education  
November 8, 2004

2004-05 Strategic Planning Process  
Progress Report

*Earlier this year, the Council began a process for updating the public agenda and related action plans for Kentucky's system of postsecondary and adult education. This progress report highlights activities that have taken place over the last few months and lays out a preliminary set of policy issues for discussion with the Council, the presidents, and other partners as we begin development of a revised agenda to guide our work over the coming years.*

**What We've Been Doing**

***Current Assessment***—Council staff completed a comprehensive analysis of demographic, economic, and education data as background to the strategic planning process. The analysis included:

- A review of regional and statewide data from 1997 to the present, which culminated in a statewide data book and regional profiles that were shared at the regional forums.
- Results from *Measuring Up 2004*—the national report card on postsecondary education—which provided valuable information on Kentucky's recent progress and continued challenges in relation to the top performing states.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, and Council staff are wrapping up work on projections of enrollment, retention, and graduation rates needed for Kentucky to reach the national average by 2020.

***Trusteeship Conference***—The Governor's Conference on Trusteeship served as the official kick-off event for the planning process. Peter Ewell, a leading accountability expert from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, presented Kentucky's *Measuring Up 2004* results for members of SCOPE and conference participants. Steve Kay, a professional facilitator, guided breakout discussions mirroring the format of the regional forums.

***Regional Forums***—Nine regional forums were held between September 29 and October 27 to solicit public input on the update of the public agenda and the equal educational opportunities plan:

September 29, Covington  
October 4, Louisville  
October 12, Prestonsburg  
October 13, Manchester  
October 14, Lexington  
October 19, Ashland  
October 25, Paducah  
October 26, Madisonville  
October 27, Glasgow

Attendance at the forums ranged from 25-125. Steve Kay, a consultant with the Lexington firm Roberts and Kay, facilitated the meetings. Governor Ernie Fletcher attended the forum in Glasgow.

***On-line Survey***—To complement the regional forum discussions, we have posted an on-line survey to solicit additional advice and comment. Forum participants, invitees who were unable to attend the forums, and other interested individuals are welcome to share their ideas.

***Meetings with Editorial Boards and Others***—While touring the state to conduct the regional forums in September and October, Council President Tom Layzell, individual Council members, and staff took the opportunity to meet with editorial boards, rotary clubs, and other local groups to discuss the planning process.

## **What We're Learning**

Our review of data about Kentucky's standings and system performance, our conversations with governing board members and state and campus leaders, our regional forum discussions with individuals across the Commonwealth, our daily interactions with colleagues and partners—all of these sources suggest we have made tremendous progress in addressing many of the issues identified in our current public agenda. Nevertheless, most of these issues still need our sustained attention and commitment. Furthermore, there may be a need to direct greater emphases and resources toward challenges that have recently arisen or that Kentucky postsecondary education has not systematically addressed in the early phases of reform.

Examples of continuing challenges:

- Not enough high school graduates and adults are prepared for postsecondary study.
- Too many people in Kentucky think that college isn't for them or within reach.
- There is still too much "leakage" in the system (i.e., students are dropping out before obtaining a postsecondary credential).
- Low educational attainment of Kentucky's populace continues to plague the Commonwealth.

Examples of challenges where even greater attention may be needed:

- There are wide achievement gaps among subgroups—by race and ethnicity, gender, region, and income.
- Current teaching, learning, and support systems are not adequately meeting the needs of all students.
- Kentucky is losing ground in its efforts to keep college affordable for all students.
- Regional occupational outlooks suggest that, without intervention, most of the new jobs created will not require college degrees.
- Promotion of life-long learning and certificate and degree completion is an overarching concern.
- The state lacks a sufficient research base to address growing health concerns, help create good jobs that build a robust economy, and support community growth, vitality, and other issues facing regions across the Commonwealth.
- More and more, colleges and universities are being called upon to provide support to communities and regions that goes beyond the education of students – such as technical assistance to area businesses, leadership development, entrepreneurship training, and work with P-12 schools.

Appendix A, entitled "What We're Learning," is a more comprehensive discussion outline that describes the recent progress, current challenges, and policy issues for postsecondary education.

### ***Five Questions: The Sequel?***

In the early phases of reform, the postsecondary community focused its energy, attention, and resources on these five questions:

1. Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?
2. Are more students enrolling?
3. Are more students advancing through the system?
4. Are we preparing Kentuckians for life and work?
5. Are Kentucky's communities and economy benefiting?

At this juncture in the planning process, our analyses and discussions confirm that the policy directives embedded in these five questions are as relevant moving forward as they were seven years ago; these were the right five questions at the time reform began. However, the Council staff believes the addition of a sixth question and some minor refinements to the existing questions would best capture the essence of the work that lies ahead. The six questions that might best represent the policy issues described in the attached “What We’re Learning” discussion outline are:

1. Are Kentuckians of all ages prepared for postsecondary education?
2. Is Kentucky postsecondary education affordable for students?
3. Are more students enrolling and advancing through the system?
4. Are more students earning certificates and degrees?
5. Are we preparing graduates for life and work in Kentucky?
6. Are Kentucky’s communities and economy benefiting?

Feedback on these proposed changes to the five questions will be sought over the coming months.

## **What’s Next**

The discussion outline in Appendix A, along with the advice and comments of Council members, presidents, and others in early November will guide the development of a draft public agenda and statewide action plan. These companion documents are described below:

### *The Public Agenda...*

- *Communicates the critical set of state issues and challenges requiring the sustained attention and capacity of Kentucky’s postsecondary education system.*
- *Demonstrates the ongoing commitment to improving the lives of Kentuckians and the economic prosperity of the state.*
- *Transcends terms of office, political divisions, and institutional loyalties.*
- *Engages all Kentucky colleges and universities.*
- *Builds on current statewide efforts for education reform and on current adult and postsecondary education initiatives directed by the current public agenda.*

### *The Statewide Action Plan...*

- *Outlines recent progress and the challenges ahead.*
- *Provides broad policy direction for advancing the public agenda over the next four years.*
- *Has easily understood key indicators and benchmarks to gauge progress.*

- *Encourages a collaborative approach within the system and with reform partners across the Commonwealth.*

The Council's Executive Committee and the presidents will review a first draft at their respective December 1 meetings. Changes resulting from those conversations will be made quickly so that by early December, we will have a discussion draft for wide distribution to all major constituents, including:

- Strategic Committee on Postsecondary Education
- Other key executive and legislative branch members and their staffs
- Institutional board members and campus leaders including administrators, faculty, staff, and students
- Regional forum participants and invitees, including business, labor, government, and community leaders

The Council staff also will post the discussion draft to the Council Website for easy access to the postsecondary community, policy makers, and the general public.

To complement these state-level documents, the Council staff is in the process of developing a summary of regional issues for each of the "Can We Talk?" forums, based on the staff's data assessments and the forum discussions. These summaries, which will be broadly distributed in early 2005 for review, will help guide the development of institutional action plans in the next planning phase, which will take place from March through July 2005. Draft guidelines for this phase of the process will be shared with Council members and presidents in January.

## **“What We’re Learning”**

### **Developing a Public Agenda and Statewide Action Plan for Kentucky Postsecondary Education**

#### **PREPARATION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

##### **PROGRESS**

###### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- Adult education enrollment has increased 135 percent in four years.
- Kentucky had the highest increase in the nation in the percent of adults with a high school credential from 1990-2000.
- More 8<sup>th</sup> graders are scoring well on national assessments than a decade ago.
- More high school students are taking the right courses for college; since 1998, the number of dual enrollment courses taken in high school nearly tripled, and the number of AP courses almost doubled.

##### **CHALLENGES**

###### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- Minority and low-income students are not taking challenging courses in high school or scoring as well on standardized tests.
- Adult education enrollment represents only 12 percent of adults at lowest literacy levels.
- Too many high school graduates entering college are not adequately prepared; 30 percent score 18 or less on the ACT, compared to 26 percent nationally.
- Only 62 percent of 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders are taught by qualified teachers, compared to 81 percent in top-performing states (as reported in *Measuring Up 2004*).
- Compared to top performing states, middle and high school students are performing poorly on national assessments, including the National Assessment of Education Progress, Advanced Placement exams, and the ACT.

##### **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

###### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- Greater participation in adult education programs and increased production of GED graduates.
- More explicit information from the postsecondary community about what it takes to succeed in college.
- Smoother transition from high school and GED programs to college through closer alignment of the secondary, adult, and postsecondary systems.
- Postsecondary involvement in high school restructuring efforts.
- Broader availability of Advanced Placement and dual enrollment/credit opportunities.
- Increased access to programs and services that help students perform well on college entrance examinations.
- Strengthened teacher and educational leader preparation and professional development programs at all education levels, from early childhood to adult education.
- Expanded efforts to recruit a diverse teaching force and to keep good teachers working and living in Kentucky.
- More concerted effort to close the achievement gap and increase college-going among all subpopulations of students.
- Strengthened K-12 guidance counseling to provide early college awareness and planning.

## **AFFORDABILITY**

### **PROGRESS**

#### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- Kentucky ranks 14<sup>th</sup> among states in providing affordable postsecondary education opportunities, according to *Measuring Up 2004*.
- Average tuition and fees at Kentucky institutions in 2003-04 were 25 percent below the national average.
- Cost of public postsecondary education as a percent of family income is unchanged from a decade ago.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- While college in Kentucky remains affordable compared to other states, it is losing ground. The state's ranking in overall affordability slipped from 8 to 14 from 2002 to 2004.
- Tuition and fees have increased on average 7.5 percent per year over the last decade.
- 83 percent of GED examinees report income of less than \$10,000 a year.
- Adequate financial aid is not available for part-time students, a barrier for adults in the workforce.
- Better information is needed about net college costs and affordability to make good policy decisions.

### **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

#### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- More integrated and aligned policies governing financial aid, tuition, and state appropriations aimed at reducing financial barriers for students and increasing institutional capacity to meet the educational needs of the state.
- Mutually supporting efforts among the policy-making bodies that have responsibilities in the area of student affordability.
- Improved communications with prospective students and their families about financial aid opportunities and net college costs to dispel common misperceptions about higher education affordability.
- Expanded grant programs and low-interest/forgivable student loans that address workforce demands and the needs of underserved populations.
- Incentives for students to take a rigorous high school curriculum.
- Better access to financial aid for GED graduates and part-time and transfer students.

## **PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESSION**

### **PROGRESS**

#### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- Since 1998, total enrollment in postsecondary education increased 25 percent.
- The number of adult education students transitioning to college increased from 12 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2003.
- For the first time, the college-going rate of 9<sup>th</sup> graders exceeds the national average, up from 34 to 38 percent over the last decade.
- The proportion of Kentucky resident African Americans in the student body has increased at both the undergraduate and graduate levels from 1995 to 2003.
- During that same period, the college participation rate of minority ethnic students rose from 15 to 32 percent.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- Too many people in Kentucky think college is out of reach or irrelevant.
- The college participation rate of both young and working-age adults is low compared to the top-performing states; minority and low-income students are much less likely to go to college than white, affluent students.
- The proportion of degree-seeking freshmen returning their second year is relatively unchanged over the last six years.
- The number of students transferring from two-year to four-year institutions was lower in 2003 than in 1998.

### **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

#### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- Expanded outreach efforts at the state and grassroots level that focus on underserved regions and populations to increase the number of Kentuckians who value and pursue postsecondary education.
- Accelerated efforts to help more GED graduates transition to postsecondary education.
- Expanded capacity to serve more students more effectively and with fewer resources through course redesign and new instructional models.
- Better coordination of distance education programs, technologies, and faculty support services.
- Creative use of alternative methods of program delivery—such as weekend and evening courses, competency-based instruction and assessments, distance learning, and institutional collaboration—that meet regional needs and lead to certifications and degrees.
- Concentrated efforts across the postsecondary system to strengthen the guidance and support provided to on-campus and distance education students.
- Incentives and encouragement for students to transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution.



## **DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PRODUCTION**

### **PROGRESS**

#### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- At the state's public universities, the systemwide six-year graduation rate rose from 36.7 percent in 1998 to 45.3 percent in 2003.
- Kentucky is among the fastest improving states on the proportion of students completing certificates and degrees relative to the number enrolled.
- The proportion of degrees conferred in 2003 to Kentucky resident African Americans was 5.8 percent, up from 4.4 percent in 1995.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- More baccalaureate degrees are needed to reach the national average in educational attainment by 2020 (number to be determined).
- For every 100 9<sup>th</sup> graders, only 15 complete a degree.
- Kentucky's graduation rate remains well below the national rate: 45.3 percent of first-time, full-time college students complete a degree within six years, compared to 54.3 percent nationally.
- Kentucky ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percent of the adult population with a four-year degree or higher.
- Most growth in credentials awarded is at the certificate level.
- More graduate and professional degree production is needed to spur economic development, sustain vital communities, and provide professional services to Kentucky's people.

### **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

#### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- Expanded capacity of the system to produce more certificate and degree holders in Kentucky.
- More collaboration with state and local partners to address workforce shortages in targeted regions and in degree areas (undergraduate and graduate) that support economic development.
- Institutional financial incentives and rewards linked to timely graduation and degree completion.

## **PREPARATION FOR LIFE AND WORK**

### **PROGRESS**

#### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- College graduates perform well on licensure and teacher certification exams.
- Two-year college students score at or above the national average on Work Keys assessments.
- Results from the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement show public universities have made progress on measures of undergraduate student experience, especially “enriching educational experience” and “interactions with faculty members.”

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- Four-year college students score below the national average on assessments of student learning.
- Compared to 2001, the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement shows a decline in the proportion of college students who vote, volunteer, and give to charity.
- Kentuckians do not score well on graduate entrance examinations.
- There is a lack of information in Kentucky and nationally about the contributions of our colleges and universities to the educational capital of the state and nation.

### **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

#### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- Improved undergraduate student learning so that more graduates are prepared for careers and graduate and professional programs.
- Integration of civic literacy into the curriculum and the overall college experience so that students become engaged citizens and leaders.
- Statewide accountability measures for student learning to track the postsecondary system’s contribution to the educational capital of the state and make comparisons against national benchmarks and performance of other states.

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## **PROGRESS**

### **Reform efforts to date show that:**

- Federal research and development spending per capita increased 92 percent since 1996.
- The Bucks for Brains program has dedicated \$700 million to support research and academic programs at the public universities; the number of endowed chairs is up from 55 in 1997 to 170 in 2003; professorships rose from 53 to 237.
- Since 2001, nearly 128,000 employees upgraded their skills through workforce education funded by Kentucky Adult Education and its partnership with the Workforce Alliance.
- From 1990 to 2000, Kentucky's per capita income increased from 79.3 percent to 81.8 percent of the U.S. average, the 10<sup>th</sup> highest rate of increase in the nation.

## **CHALLENGES**

### **Data analyses and planning discussions suggest that:**

- Kentucky currently ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in the amount of federal research and development dollars generated.
- Kentucky's per capita income is only 81.8 percent of the national average.
- Services and support provided by faculty to communities, businesses, and schools is not always measured or rewarded.

## **SUGGESTED POLICY ISSUES**

### **Current and projected challenges point to a need for:**

- Stronger partnerships with economic development partners to develop, attract, and keep jobs that will make Kentucky competitive in the global economy.
- Expanded research capacity directed at the state's priority research and economic development areas.
- Greater efforts to attract more research dollars to Kentucky.
- Transfer of research and technology to applications that lead to economic growth, job creation, and improved quality of life.
- Greater emphasis on the role of postsecondary institutions as "stewards of place" that partner with business, civic, and K-12 communities to solve local, regional, and state problems.
- Better alignment of postsecondary and adult workforce training activities with initiatives in other cabinets and agencies.
- Greater commitment from the postsecondary community to entrepreneurship and leadership development as key strategies for economic development.
- More adults earning workforce education certificates through expanded marketing to employers and employees.

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